

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 3768

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECRP, BM

SUBJ: CERP 002 - BURMA'S RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

QUOTED BELOW IS THE SUMMARY OF SUBJECT REPORT. FULL TEXT
BEING POUCHED.

BURMESE TRADE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES
FELL SOMEWHAT DURING THE PAST YEAR AS THE THE GUB TURNED MORE
TO THE WEST FOR FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. IN
PARTICULAR, BURMA'S INCREASED RELIANCE ON IFI'S FOR
FINANCING MAJOR PROJECTS PLACED A CONSTRAINT ON COMMUNIST
BLOC TRADE. THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE AND THE GUB'S CON-
TINUING EFFORT TO AVOID IMBALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH
THE USSR AND THE PRC ALSO SERVED TO INHIBIT THE DEVELOPMENT
OF CLOSER RELATIONS WITH BOTH POWERS AND FACILITATED THE
EMERGENCE OF SOMEWHAT CLOSER CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC TIES
WITH THE WEST, INCLUDING THE U.S. THERE WAS A CON-
SIDERABLE GROWTH, HOWEVER IN BURMA'S RELATIONS WITH
VIET-NAM. THE BURMESE SEEM TO VIEW THE DRV AS A POTENTIAL
COUNTER TO ANY PRC EXPANSIONIST TENDENCIES; AND THE
SOVIETS, WITH A LESS HEAVY-HANDED APPROACH THAN USUAL,
MAY BE CONTENT TO LET THE VIETNAMESE PLAY A LEADING
ROLE IN OFFSETTING CHINESE INFLUENCE HERE. ANOTHER
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FACTOR WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO TO THE PRC'S FAILURE TO

EXPLOIT ITS OPPORTUNITIES WHICH EMERGED IN LATE 1975
TO DEVELOP CLOSER TIES WITH BURMA WAS THE CONFUSION
IN PRC POLICY FOLLOWING THE DEATHS OF CHOU AND MAO AND
THE RESULTING POWER STRUGGLE. THE GUB SECRETLY APPLAUDED
THE APPARENT "MODERATE" VICTORY IN CHINA, HOPING IT
MIGHT RESULT IN LESS PRC SUPPORT FOR THE BURMESE COM-
MUNIST PARTY (BCP) INSURGENTS. THIS INSURGENCY CONTINUED
TO PLAGUE THE GUB AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL AS IN THE PAST,
AND THERE HAS BEEN NO CONVINCING EVIDENCE OF ANY DECREASE
IN CHINESE SUPPORT FOR IT.
OSBORN

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